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# GEOG 140: Human Geography—A Peer Review of Teaching Project Benchmark Portfolio

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Benchmark Portfolio  
Peer Review of Teaching 2012-2013  
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Geography 140: Human Geography



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## Table of Contents

Objectives of Peer Review Course Portfolio . . . . .	3
• The author's objectives for this portfolio	
Description of the Course . . . . .	4
• Course goals	
• Context	
• Enrollment/demographics	
Teaching Methods/Course Materials/Course Activities . . . . .	6
• Teaching methods, course, materials, and outside activities used	
• Rationale for teaching methods	
• Illustration of changes from previous years/sections	
The course and the broader curriculum . . . . .	10
• Explanations of how this course fits with others in the department and the university	
Analysis of Student Learning . . . . .	11
• Analysis of particular students and assignments	
• Analysis of grades and grade trends	
Planned changes . . . . .	17
• Description of planned changes to the syllabus, delivery method, etc.	
Appendices	
• Appendix 1: Syllabus . . . . .	19
• Appendix 2: 10-Minute Reflective Essay (Wallerstein-10 points) . . . . .	26
• Appendix 3: 10-Minute Reflective Essay (Centrifugal – 5 points) . . . . .	29
• Appendix 4: 10-Minute Reflective Essay (Christaller – 10 points) . . . . .	32
• Appendix 5: Blackboard (Sample Learning Module) . . . . .	35
• Appendix 6: Blackboard (Sample Learning Module Contents) . . . . .	36
• Appendix 7: Sample TASK Page . . . . .	37
• Appendix 8: Extra Credit Project (Stranger – 25 points) . . . . .	38
• Appendix 9: Extra Credit Project (Restaurant – 15 points) . . . . .	45

## Objectives of the Peer Review Course Portfolio

I want to use the opportunity to systematically evaluate my course regarding what is working well, what is not, and how I can be a better teacher for my students representing the discipline, the department, and the university. Geography 140 (Human Geography) is a fundamental course to focus on student retention and prepare a foundation for new geography majors or minors. It teaches basic geographic skills and ways of evaluating real world events that are critical for students becoming intelligent media consumers and informed citizens of a globalized world.

### Improve Course

As a lecturer, I am in the process of honing and fine-tuning all of the courses I am teaching. I teach several large lecture courses every semester, and I believe that writing this course portfolio will help me systematically evaluate these courses. For this benchmark portfolio, I am examining a course I am not completely satisfied with; I am not satisfied with student achievement, learning, and application. In addition, every semester I try to do too much and end up getting behind: I would like to identify those “time traps” so I can more easily keep the course on schedule. Finally, I want to be sure this course is in compliance with its ACE requirements and the Advanced Placement Human Geography standards.

This benchmark portfolio will also allow me to evaluate my own teaching skills, making a distinction between teaching and presentation skills. Presentation skills are what happen in the classroom while teaching skills reflect the integrative web of goals, strategies, objectives, and assessments that are the underlying foundation for classroom presentations, activities, and exams. Presentation in the classroom can be driven by the textbook – where course lecture is primarily a presentation of the textbook – or it can be driven by deeper goals, objectives, and strategies of which the textbook is one element.

One additional way to improve this course is to build a Human Geography Lab course, so another of my goals for this portfolio is to evaluate how the structure of this course can provide a structure for lab exercises linking to the goals and processes of the lecture course.

### Increase Value for Students

I have three basic questions regarding ways I can improve this course for students. First, how do I increase student engagement in a large lecture class? I have made the class more of an integrated, active-learning course, and this portfolio will provide the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of this hybrid structure. Second, I want to know that students are really learning what I am presenting to them and what I am guiding them to learn. Finally, I want to focus on ways to protect student mental health by providing a well-integrated, well-organized course from a student-perspective. Do all of the weekly testing activities really aid student learning? Has the course been conceptually scaffolded? Does this course help students manage their time well, and does this course help students build a “mental bookcase” structure to help with retrieval of information and long-term retention of learning? Overall, one of my goals of this portfolio is to evaluate how my course can help students become better learners.

I also have some more direct goals regarding student learning. Can I evaluate the effectiveness of weekly assignments as adequate preparation for the exams; do higher scores on the weekly assignments correlate to higher scores on the exams? In what ways do the class assignments and activities demonstrate student mastery? Do students do better on some topics rather than others? Are they better on later rather than earlier assignments? If so, this might suggest a successful learning curve and use of earlier concepts and skills later in the course.

### Professional Development

Finally, I am well aware that this portfolio can help me document and assess my faculty development efforts. I will be able to document the effort that goes into my teaching activities, and this portfolio can serve as source material for future conference presentations or scholarly publications. I will be able to evaluate the internal consistency and coherence of my course. This portfolio provides a conceptual structure and physical place to put observations and notes about course improvement from semester to semester, which will enable me to become even more secure about the intellectual and pedagogical underpinnings of my course. Ultimately, I want to become better at communicating and motivating my students about what I expect and what they should expect out of the course and themselves.

## Description of the Course

For specific Course Goals please see the Syllabus ([Appendix 1](#)). The rest of this section will cover course context and enrollment/demographics.

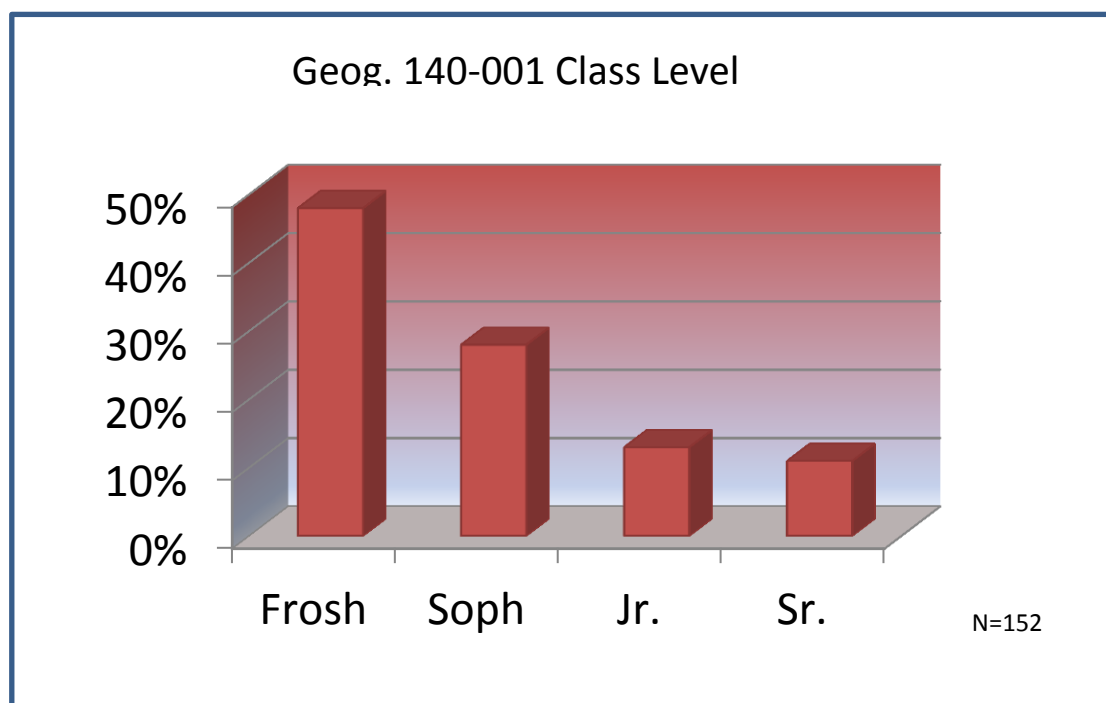
My goals in setting up the course are designed to satisfy a variety of “voices.” The University: that this course fulfills its ACE requirements especially regarding diversity and promotion of student retention. The Discipline: that this course is consistent with the goals of the AP Human Geography standards. In addition, I have looked at the objectives and contents of several comparable Human Geography texts, comparing them and incorporating relevant goals and objectives. The Department: that this course provides a broad spectrum of topics and introduces skills and tools of geography, building a foundation that can serve as a stand-alone course, if this is the only geography course the student takes; or that can provide students with the appropriate foundation in skills and concepts they can draw on when taking other geography courses. In addition, a goal of this course is for students to be able to use the skills and knowledge they have gained through this course in other courses they take. The Students: enable students to become more deeply and broadly connected to the world around them, encouraging their natural curiosity, encourage more critical spatial thinking skills, and support student mastery of basic geographic concepts, themes, and models. In addition, some of my indirect goals regarding students include helping them become better students at taking notes, studying, and taking exams; and to promote student mental health through organization and clarity of the course.

What do I want my students to learn about human geography? First of all, how practical it is – it is all around us. It teaches us not to be afraid of the complexity of the world; geography helps us to unpack complexity and look at it clearly and analytically. I hope that with the skills students learn in my class, they will continue to evaluate their world by looking for patterns, interactions, and dynamics of scales and how phenomena are related to each other in place. That is, I would like for students to become comfortable using spatial analysis and, through experience, value the dimension a geographic analysis provides throughout their academic careers and beyond.

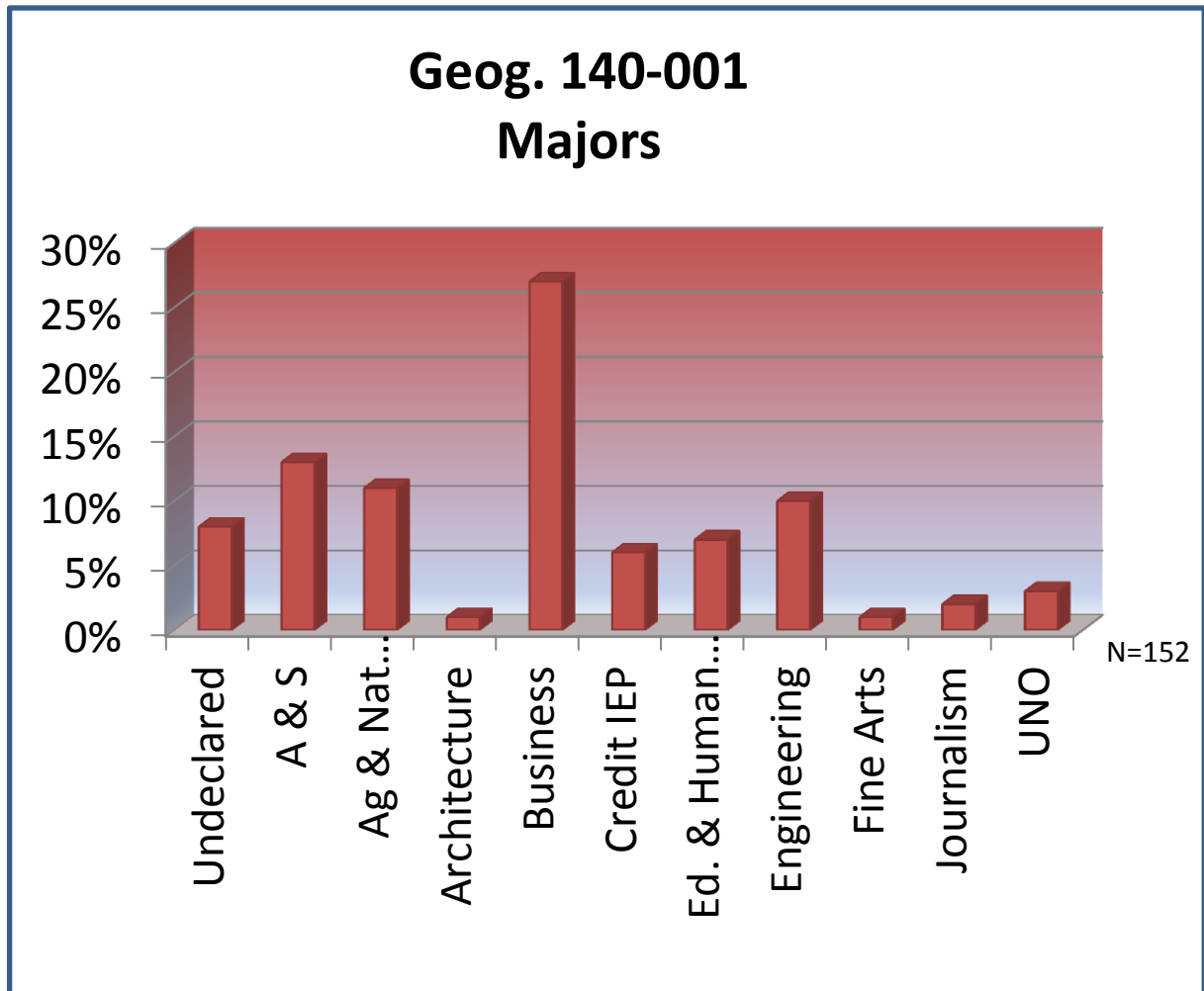
Throughout the semester, this course will be challenging students' own cultural paradigms and this is an openness I hope they will continue to exercise once the class is over. My hope is that students will walk away from class confident that they have the tools and understanding to evaluate the situations of the world that come into their experience. At the heart of a geographical perspective is a concern with the ways in which events and processes in one place can influence those operating at other places and scales. Relationships are constantly changing and students should understand how and why change occurs.

#### Enrollment/Demographics

Students are both lower division and upper division and occasionally there may even be a graduate student or two. Students come from all disciplines; some have never had a college-level geography course before while others have had several. There are no prerequisites; many students have very little knowledge of geography or think of geography only in terms of lakes, rivers, capitals, and products (so-called "place" geography). In regards to the latter presupposition, there are many students, at the beginning of the semester, who assume Human Geography will be a relatively easy course; most students are not familiar with the basic principles and skills required in a geography course. I've had many students comment at the



end of the semester that they had no idea geography covered so much. Others are taking a large lecture course because they assume there will be less required of them in terms of homework and projects. In the past, a recognizable proportion of students are usually pre-service teachers fulfilling a social studies requirement, although increasingly, there are more business majors taking this course. For many students this may be the only geography course they take.



### Teaching Methods/Course Materials/Course Activities

This section of the project will discuss teaching methods, course, materials, and outside activities used, my rationale for my teaching methods, and illustration of changes from previous years/sections

In the classroom, the course is almost entirely lecture-based with the usual Socratic dialog. Because this class is taught in a large lecture hall, I try to find new ways to engage more of the students in dialog. In past years I have used group discussion with individuals from each group reporting on their group's conclusions,

which has been a successful method of engagement. I have also used clickers in past semesters. Students like the clickers and I like the level of engagement clickers provide, but I have had to spend more time addressing technical issues that take away from class preparation and focus, and the method of transferring grades from the clicker program to Blackboard has been much less than seamless; so this semester I decided not to use clickers. As a result, my sense is that student attention wandered a bit more and responses to questions seemed more forced.

I try to make my lectures interesting, with lots of enthusiasm to rouse attention and promote student interest and I augment my lectures using Power Points that help both my students and myself stay on track. I use the animation features of Power Point so I am in control of presenting the next idea or illustration so students are listening to what I am saying instead of madly trying to copy down everything on the Power Point and tuning me out. It also allows me to create a discovery and disclose approach in my lectures that can engage students more actively when we are in lecture mode. These Power Points also may incorporate YouTube videos, DVD presentations, clicker questions, in-class group discussion exercises, and map analyses.

For the in-class map analysis, maps are usually projected onto a screen through Power Point and I ask students a series of guided questions to help them analyze the map. Often it is the same students that respond to questions but I do believe other students benefit from these observations. As the semester progresses, I will get a few more students volunteering their analysis.

I give periodic 10-minute Reflective Essay questions at the beginning of class regarding some topic covered in the last lecture. Students are allowed to use their notes and talk with their neighbors but they cannot use their textbooks or look for answers on-line. Then students are to write a short answer to hand in for credit ([Appendices 2-4](#)). I do this for several reasons. I want to make sure that students grasped the point I was trying to make. That is why they can use their notes or talk to each other but they cannot use the textbook or look up information on their electronic devices. While students are conversing and writing, I am walking around the room, interacting with them, helping them clarify points, and making sure no one is using the text or Internet to get their answers. They also are engaged in guided discussion on topic. In addition, I want to provide some writing exercises in class and have found that such short-answer questions are more practical in a large class than formal essays. Finally, these review questions also serve as an itinerant attendance record.

At the end of a chapter, I put all the Power Points on Blackboard for students to study. It is a further way students can check the accuracy of their note-taking.

I give three unit exams and the final. I also give a vocabulary quiz and a chapter comprehension quiz for each chapter for a total of 11 quiz sets per semester ([see Syllabus, Appendix 1](#)). Students also have access to electronic flash cards through Blackboard. These tests are administered electronically, but students can access them from their own computers or other electronic devices. The terms quiz opens 2 days before the new chapter begins. This means that by the time I introduce the topic in class, most students have at least



skimmed the chapter for terms and have familiarized themselves with the topic. This also means I don't have to spend lecture time defining terms, but can be using the terms in more meaningful discourse from the beginning. Students have one week to complete the vocabulary quiz with three chances to take it and get all the points. The computer chooses 20 terms at random for each student, and students get a new set of terms in a different order each time they open the quiz. They also must wait 24 hours between each attempt so they have ample time to review the vocabulary again. Because this arrangement could allow for students to use their text or notes to help them, which is not allowed, I set the quizzes for 3 minutes more than the number of questions they have. The computer program automatically records the highest score of the three attempts.

I also give a comprehensive quiz when we have finished a chapter, so there are 11 of these as well. These quizzes contain only 20 questions, and students have only one opportunity to get all the points. These quizzes are also set for 23 minutes, and they have only 3 days to complete the quiz. I believe this system encourages students to keep up with their reading. They are also encouraged to keep this information in longer-term memory in that the vocabulary terms and comprehension questions appear on the unit tests along with some additional comprehension questions they have not seen before. Each unit test is approximately 50% new material and 50% pre-tested material therefore students still have to study for the exams, but they do not approach their study as if they have never seen the chapter before.

Because all of my classes are very large, I depend on computer-generated tests that are administered at a secured Testing Center where the tests are proctored. These tests are randomly generated by the computer from a large database of questions so each student receives a different test. It is impossible to go over the test in class because of this fact, but after the test is over, students are able to see the correct answers and they are welcome to go over their tests individually with me or ask questions through email. All exams are open for a week, including weekends, allowing students to take the test when they are most ready. Three of the exams have 50 questions each, and the final has 100 questions; however, the testing period is set for two hours. I do not want students to feel rushed. I often have several students in my classes who are taking my course for credit through the Intensive Language Program and this timing also accommodates their needs as well as some of the needs students with disabilities may have. The tests are proctored through the Testing Center, so I also do not lose any class time on testing. Students seem to like this arrangement; it gives them more control over their timing for taking the test when it best fits their schedule and their level of preparedness.

This semester I developed a TASK page on Blackboard ([Appendix 7](#)) to help students stay on track with their assignments. Clearly there are many assignments for students to keep track of during the semester; 22 plus the 4 exams. Initially I had explained to the class that the vocabulary quizzes always began two days prior to the new chapter beginning and the comprehension (Cloze) quiz was due 3 days after we had completed a chapter. This was enough for some students, and allowed me the flexibility to extend a topic for an extra day or two. However, some students were getting lost. Therefore I developed a TASK page on Blackboard where I post all of the due dates and I email students whenever there is a new post. Unfortunately, the TASK page still proved to be too complicated for some students who preferred to know that all vocabulary

tests began and end on Sundays and all Cloze quizzes would start on Thursdays and end on Sundays. I tried to honor this schedule as best I could, but this still didn't capture all of the students who had time-conflicts or simply forgot to do the work. As a result of the TASK page and the requests of students for a more regimented schedule, I have been able to stay on track and not be caught in time traps. I have finished all of the chapters as required for the semester.

The final exam is semi-comprehensive. It is composed of the most frequently missed question of the previous three exams (where 50% or more of the students missed the question), plus the new material since the previous exam. I post the most frequently missed questions on Blackboard and tell students these many not be the exact questions, but there will be questions similar to these. In addition, although I post the most frequently missed questions, I do not post the answers. Students can study their own past exams, Power Points, study guides, lecture notes, and textbook for answers.

#### Hybrid Course-Blackboard Organization

Blackboard is an integral part of my course. As expected, it includes the Syllabus and Course Planner ([Appendix 1](#)). All assignments, quizzes, exams, and tasks are posted on Blackboard. Most chapters are provided with a summary statement on their folders in the Learning Modules section ([Appendix 5](#)), and each folder is populated with all of the materials relevant to that chapter ([Appendix 6](#)). In addition, I have added the TASK page tool for students to access regarding the due dates of their assignments in the course ([Appendix 7](#)) which is updated continuously. Finally, there is a special section for Testing Center Exams, which makes it easier for student to find the appropriate exams at the Testing Center when they are ready to take the exams.

#### Textbook

I have used several textbooks in the past but have been frustrated with the lack of continuity of clear, fundamental concepts woven throughout the text. For example, using one fairly popular text, I spent some time at the beginning of the semester discussing the spatial perspective, which is a critical concept in the course – not just for students to understand, but to practice throughout the course and, hopefully, beyond. Halfway through the semester I asked students in a 10-minute Reflective Essay to explain the spatial perspective in geography and was shocked when I found they could not do so. I realized the fundamental concepts to which all of the topics were supposed to be linked, were getting lost in the detail of the chapters. Fortunately, I found a text that modeled its chapter organization based on five basic themes of geography. Each of the 11 topics, or chapters, is divided into the five themes of region, mobility, globalization, human-environment interaction, and landscape. This textbook also contributes to one of my goals for the PRT Project – to analyze my course against the requirements for Human Geography following central themes. I also assign outside articles that are posted on Blackboard.

#### Human Geography Lab

Ideally, if we had a Human Geography Lab course, we would be able to go to a computer lab for guided map analysis exercises, or out on walking tours or mini-field trips in the local area to augment and illustrate what students are learning in class. However, with 150 students in a 50 minute session, this option is quite impractical. Instead, I provide guided extra credit assignments ([Appendices 8 and 9](#)) as ways for students to

experience the geography around them and investigating landscapes on their own. In one case, I provide an extra credit assignment where students bring back pictures of sacred spaces or ethnic places in the community which leads to a discussion of what constitutes sacred space in a culture or why ethnic places are grouped as they are. In another assignment, I ask students to analyze a Hasidic community in New York as it is portrayed in the film, *A Stranger Among Us*. I offer an ethnic restaurant activity where students select a non-chain restaurant, analyze their meals based on the agriculture of the region, and interview the restaurant owners. Some semesters I provide an opportunity for students to evaluate the economic landscape between Lincoln and Omaha.

I have attempted computer-based mapping exercises, but with a class of over 150 students and with various levels of computer expertise, this approach has proven to be more time-consuming than useful. Map analysis would be an excellent addition as a Human Geography Lab component where students would be working with the same assignments at the same time in class where help was more immediately available.

#### What I Have Done Differently from Previous Semesters

I have been much more mindful – my teaching is much more conscious and planned on a day-to-day basis. I make sure I have stated objectives for every chapter we cover and that I do my best to cover them (some of my objectives are not in the order I would like, so I need to change this). I am not getting stuck in the details of any one chapter, and I am staying on schedule. I have made better use of my TA so I can spend more time in preparation and planning. I have redesigned lectures to follow the fundamental structure of the new text and I am better at making connection between the lectures of one day to the next, building continuity and flow.

### The course and the broader curriculum

This section explains how this course fits with others in the department and the university

Geography 140, Human Geography, is one of several undergraduate course offerings in geography including Physical Geography, Economic Geography, and World Regional Geography. Geography 140 concentrates on human populations, cultures, and landscapes, with particular attention to human-environment relations and global interconnections. It meets the undergraduate social science requirement of 3 credit hours; it also meets the requirement for additional breadth requirement for Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree. A choice of Geog. 140 or Geog. 120 is required for a Major in Geography; Geog. 140 meets one of the 10 University ACE Student Learning Outcome requirements for undergraduates. Geography 140 is an ACE 9 course in which it is to exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of human populations, cultures, and landscapes, with particular attention to human-environment relations and global interconnections.

Human Geography is one of the courses that meet the endorsement requirements or Social Science Enhancement requirements for the Elementary Education Program. It also is one of the required choices for the Social Science 7-12 Endorsement Requirement. It is a prerequisite for AGRO 305, Geography of Agriculture, which encompasses the historical, cultural, and biophysical constraints of American agriculture through the integration of Web-based sources (USDA geospatial databases), geographic information systems, and spatial/temporal models. AGRO 305 also includes an introduction to crops and evolution of agriculture in North America and available digital resources (biogeoinformatics) to understand the patterns, trends, people, places and processes of rural landscapes.

More generally, Human Geography satisfies one of the Arts and Sciences College requirements and falls under the Human Dimensions requirement for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CASNR).

There are no prerequisites for this course, and it is open to all grade levels and majors.

## Analysis of Student Learning

This section of the portfolio will analyze particular students and assignments as well as an analysis of grades and grade trends

### 10-Minute Reflective Essays

Listed below are three of the 10-minute Reflective Essays I assign in class with three annotated examples of each:

1. Please explain Wallerstein's World Systems Theory (10 points) ([Appendix 2](#))

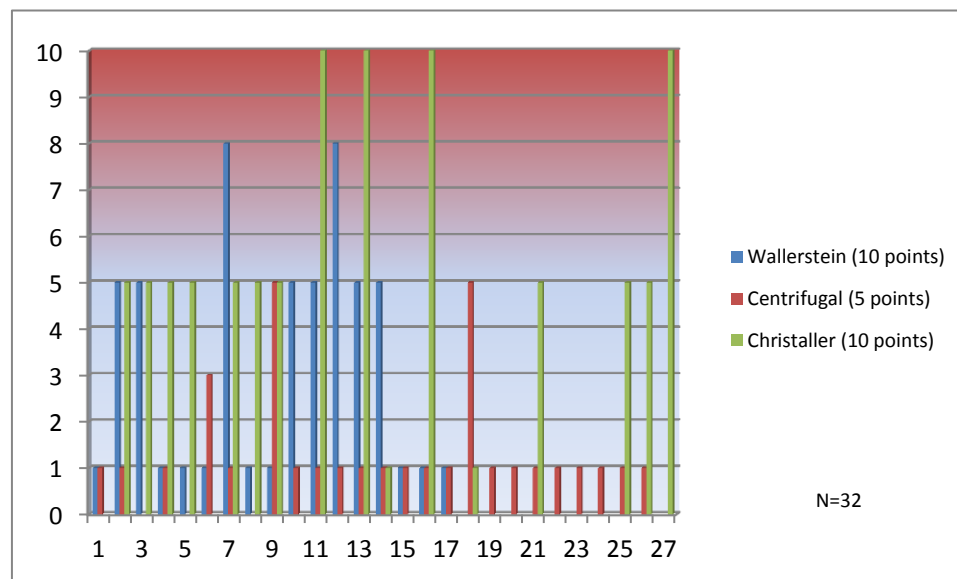
Student A: Seems to identify World Systems Theory with a communication network, but does not identify divisions of labor within the social world. This student also recognizes it is an approach to world history and social change. (1 point). Student B: Identifies the world economy as being much more than the sum of its parts and that countries fill niches in the world economy. Student B goes on to identify three of the major characteristics of Wallerstein's theory and that it is based on an economy of capitalism. (10 points). Student C: Each state is interdependent within the world economy; identifies the economic activities of developed and less developed countries; although the student does not identify core, semi-periphery, or periphery countries, he/she does speak of a global hierarchy. Less developed countries are caught in a system they cannot change and the student vaguely refers to problems that result from this. (8 points)

2. Please explain the differences between centrifugal and centripetal forces and provide examples of each. (5 points). Student A: Refers to centrifugal and centripetal forces in terms of population movement. (1 point). Student B: Has the correct application of centrifugal and centripetal forces in relation to political identity, but has the terms reversed. (3 points). Student C: Correctly identifies the terms and applies them properly to political identity. (5 points)

3. Please explain Christaller's Central Place theory, identify major terms, and the three variables used in this model. (10 points). Student A: Lists some of the components of Christaller's theory but does not bring them together conceptually. He/she also lists four terms without defining them or explaining where they fit within the theory. Finally, Student A lists the three variables required without explanation. (1 point). Student B: Identifies the main idea of Christaller's theory to explain how cities are placed around the world, but this explanation is too general. He/She gets the idea that there is a hierarchy of services in different-sized cities and that this somehow affects spacing of the cities, but this is left rather vague. (5 points). Student C: Correctly identifies Christaller's theory as a set of models designed to explain the spatial distribution of urban service centers. He/she also correctly identifies three components of the theory and points out the hierarchy of urban centers tied to the size of the market area and the range of the goods. He/she then goes on to explain how this theory can be applied in the real world and what factors are not included in Central Place Theory. (10 points).

Five of 32 students received 8 or more points on the 10 point questions meaning they understood the concept thoroughly and were able either to provide examples or applications one class period after the initial presentation. For the majority of the 10 point questions, 18 out of 32 students received only half of the points; this means they understood the concept but not well enough to apply it, come up with examples, or provide enough details. Thirty-one students out of 32 received an attendance point for at least

### Samples of 10-minute Reflection Essays



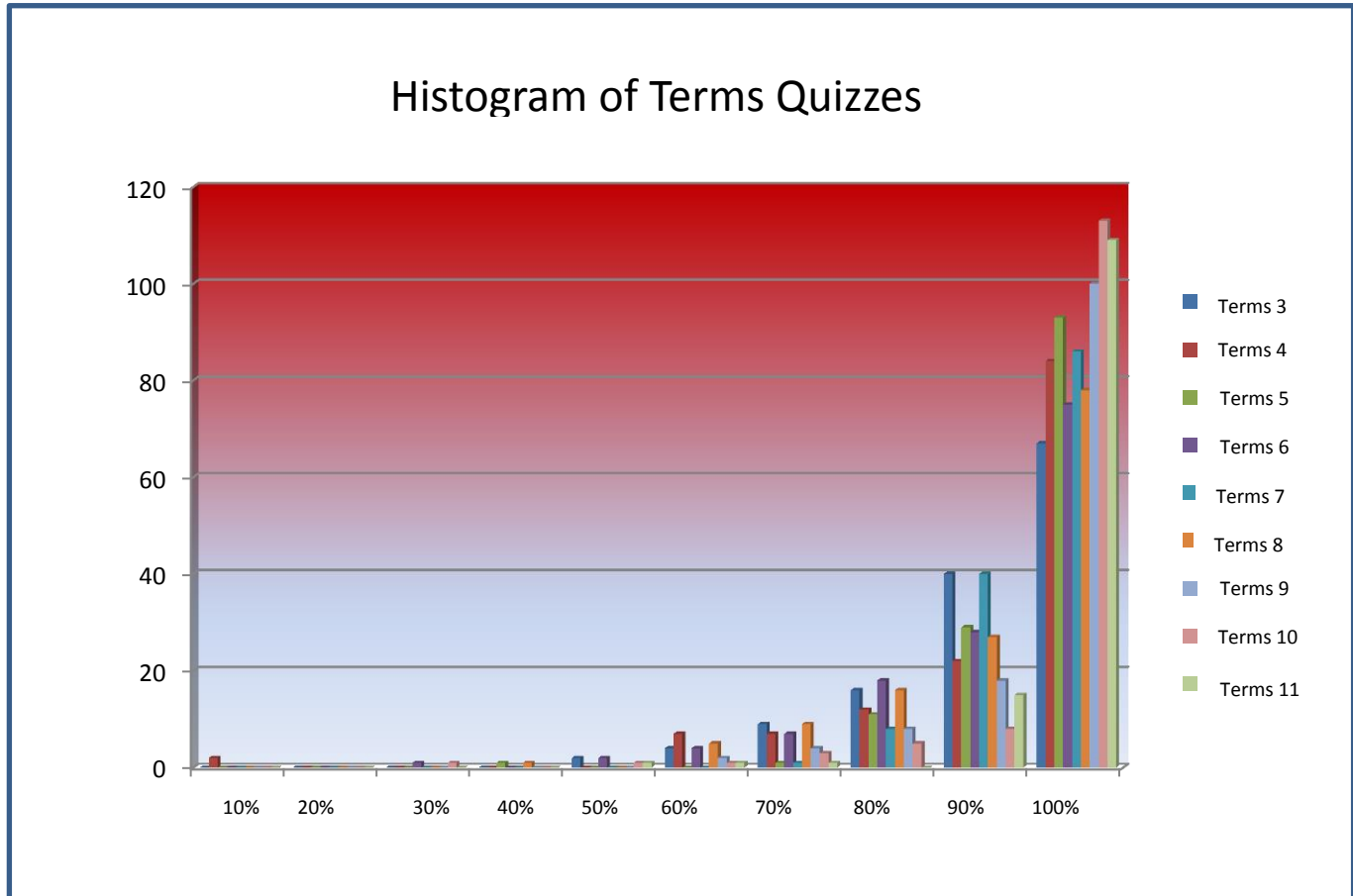
one of the questions. The questions Wallerstein, Centrifugal, and Christaller, are listed in order so it is fairly easy to see that the Wallerstein question appeared to be the most challenging of the three samples. This could mean that the question was phrased too generally, that students really did not completely grasp the concept, or that fewer students were in attendance that day. In subsequent lectures I referred back to Wallerstein's World Systems Theory when applying it to new examples in lecture and asked students if they could summarize the concept briefly for clarification before we moved on. They still could not do so, requiring that we return to the basics of that concept. Most students who received only one point for the Centrifugal/Centripetal question referred to this concept in reference to population migration rather than to the topic at hand, political identity. I did not clarify that they were to apply centrifugal and centripetal forces to political identity since we were discussing the geography of political space, but perhaps in the future I need to clarify this application more carefully. Samples of high, medium, and low responses for each of these reflective essays will be found in [Appendices 2-4](#).

#### Terms and Cloze Quizzes

These two activities comprise 58% of student grades and are essential material for the exams. How well do students learn the terms and is mastery of the terms significantly correlated with exam performance? Terms provide students with an initial insight into the material of the chapter and form the first level of comprehension. I ask students to use computer-generated flash cards to study these terms at least two days before I begin lecture on the material. This provides students with the incentive to be at least somewhat prepared for lecture when they come to class. It also gives me the freedom to begin lecture on content rather than vocabulary. Usually there are anywhere from 25-45 vocabulary words per chapter. I have the computer randomly select 20 of these terms for each student thereby making sure students are responsible for all of the terms. Students have three chances to get all of the points; they must wait 24 hours between each try so they are encouraged to review the vocabulary list before they try again. In the past, I did not stipulate a 24-hour waiting period and I found that students would continue to try on the same day, usually back-to-back usually losing points each time. Providing this 24-hour waiting period has shown that students usually do better on subsequent tries. Each time students open the terms quiz they will see a different combination of 20 vocabulary words. Students can take the Terms Quiz on their own computers at any time of the day or night for seven days wherever they are most comfortable. There is a time limit of 23 minutes for the 20 questions, and I believe that this gives students enough time, if they have to think about their answers, but not enough time to turn the quiz into an open-book assignment. This is usually one of the easiest assignments students have and mastery is very much in their control. According to the chart above, a majority of students take full advantage of this opportunity.

The Cloze Quizzes are a set of 20 questions, which evaluate student comprehension of the chapter material. The Cloze Quiz opens as soon as we finish the chapter. I use the quizzes prepared by the publisher, but also use general coverage of these questions as some of the objectives for the chapter presentation. Again, students have 23 minutes for the 20 questions, and they can take this quiz on their own computers, but they only have one chance to get all of the questions correct. These questions are scrambled so that each student gets these questions in a different order and, with only 23 minutes to complete the quiz, it would be difficult for students to collaborate. As shown on the chart below, the Cloze Quizzes give students a bit

more of a challenge than the Terms Quizzes, but a significant majority of students complete these quizzes within acceptable levels.

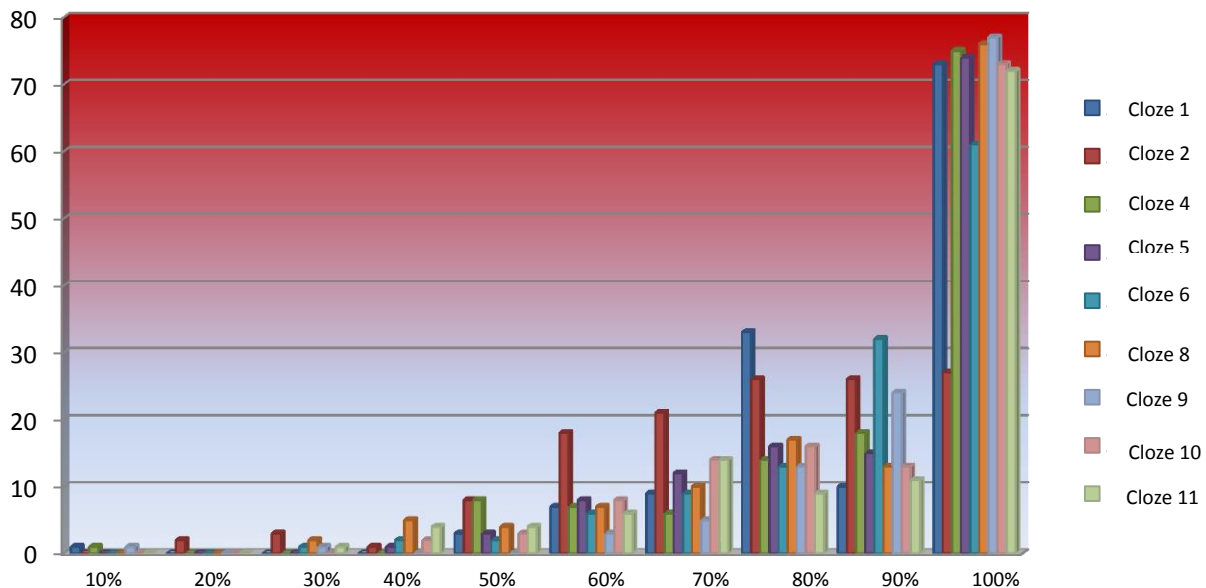


The Terms Quizzes and Cloze Quizzes are included in the Unit Exams that usually comprise 3 or more chapters. Since I ask my students to spend so much time focusing on the terms and comprehension questions, one of my questions for this portfolio is whether there is a correlation between how well students do on these short quizzes to how well they do on the Unit Exams. That is, are these assignments worth student effort and stress in relation to their performance on the Unit Exams?

Running a simple correlation study through SPSS, I found that Terms Quizzes were significantly correlated with exam performance for Exam 1 ( $r=.24, p<.01$ ), Exam 2 ( $r=.28, p<.01$ ), Exam 3 ( $r=.18, p<.05$ ), and the Final Exam ( $r=.33, p<.001$ ). This is significant in that the Unit Exams test students' longer-term memory. Providing such a strong focus on the vocabulary terms and providing several opportunities for exposure to learning seems to have created a stronger foundation for learning than if we only covered the terms once in lecture. I also found that the Cloze Quizzes were significantly correlated with exam performance for Exam 1 ( $r=.33, p=.000$ ), Exam 2 ( $r=.25, p=.003$ ), and the Final Exam ( $r=.18, p=.03$ ). The Cloze quiz was not

significantly correlated with Exam 3  $*r=.04, p=n.s.$ ). Exam 3 covers the geography of political space, agriculture, and industry. There may be several reasons why the Cloze Quizzes are not significantly

### Histogram of Cloze Quizzes



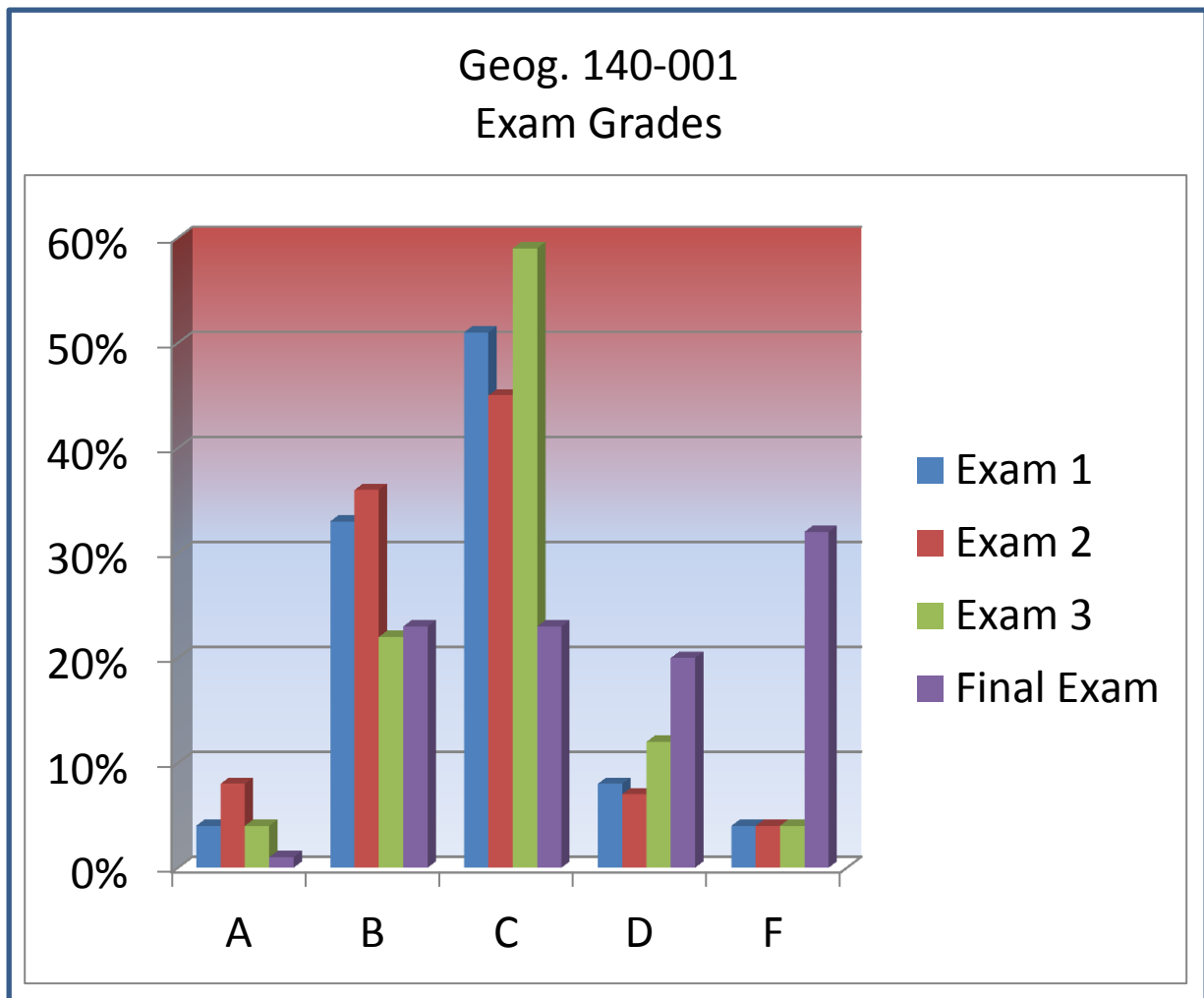
correlated with this exam. Agriculture and industry are typically of less interest to students than some other topics in Human Geography such as religion, language, or ethnicity; there could be a general attention-slump at this time in the semester (I find that attendance is also more varied at this time); or I may not be presenting these topics with the same level of enthusiasm as some of the other topics. This analysis certainly points me in the direction of more carefully evaluating this section of the course in the future.

#### Unit Exams

Each of the unit exams are composed of the Terms Quizzes, Cloze Quizzes, as well as additional comprehension questions for each of the chapters covered. The final exam is semi-comprehensive. It is composed of Most Frequently Missed questions from Exams 1-3 in which fifty percent or more of the students missed the question. These questions are posted on Blackboard for students to study although they are not provided with the answers. They can find the answers by reviewing their own tests, reviewing Power Points, lecture notes, and the textbook. The other fifty percent of the Final Exam is composed of new



material covered after the last Unit Exam. This means it includes Terms Quizzes, Cloze Quizzes, and additional comprehensive material on the new chapters. Exams 1-3 seem to follow the normal curve with



more Bs and Cs than A, D, or F grades. Exam 2 shows a bit of a lower curve than either Exam 1 or 3, and the Final Exam shows much less of a curve at all, with a higher percentage of students failing the exam. Exam 2 covers more detailed information than that required for Exams 1 and 3, which students have pointed out to me. Considering the topics covered, this is unavoidable, but I make clear throughout lecture that a higher level of detail will be required for the second exam and point out specific areas students will be responsible for. The Final Exam is more of a puzzle. Students have the Most Frequently Missed questions, which is 50 percent of the exam. The other 50 percent of the Final Exam includes the Terms Quizzes and Cloze Quizzes of the remaining chapters plus additional comprehension questions for those same chapters; in other words, the second 50 percent of the Final Exam is just like a Unit Exam. I would possibly think that the Final Exam encompasses too much material except that students are provided with half of the questions from which their individual Final Exam will be taken, and they will know the terms and comprehension questions of the new material. Maybe this is where the boundary between mid- and long-term memory lies and students assume they remember more than they do instead of diligently studying the questions provided. A

good analysis in the future would be to look at the Final Exam to see if students missed more questions from the Most Frequently Missed group or from the new material. I went over the parameters of the Final Exam several times in class especially as we got closer to Final Exam Week; yet, I still had numerous questions from students during Finals Week regarding the material the Final Exam was to cover. In these cases, I wonder if students actually even looked at the MFM questions at all.

## Planned changes

This section focuses on a description of planned changes to the syllabus, my delivery method, or any other areas I have highlighted throughout this portfolio.

### Exams

Do my testing instruments also reflect my objectives or vice versa? If I am using my own questions I can evaluate how well they test material covered in the objectives sections of the chapter presentations. If I am using publisher questions, I need to be sure my objectives reflect the material on which students will actually be tested. This does not mean I advocate teaching to the test, but in such a broad survey course there is a responsibility to be consistent and thorough, providing students with a key to what I expect from them and then provide the follow-through to help them learn the material. This is one way to positively impact student mental health; giving them latitude to learn and make learning decisions, but with guidance. Do I rely too heavily on the prepared testbanks and not enough on developing my own questions from lecture? Could this be why some students aren't taking notes in class? I worry about these students. Along the same lines, is my testbank too large? I have used a very large testbank in order to circumvent the possibility of cheating; however, it is possible that the larger the testbank the less it contributes to the integrity and focus of the test. In regards to the Most Frequently Missed Questions, in some cases, only 4 students out of 150 might get a question, missed by 3. Does this really meet the criteria I have established for a question that has been missed by 50 percent or more? I believe my students can be better served by reducing the size of the testbanks I am using without compromising the rigor of the exams. I believe students will also be better served if I write more of the questions reflecting actual lecture as well. These two changes also can positively impact student mental health, enable students to more clearly see the relationship between lecture and exam, and help students focus more effectively when studying for the exams.

### In-Class Presentations

I missed the level of access to the class and more interactive class sessions by not using iClickers. This summer I will be trying out a different approach that does not use clickers, but is a system directly tied in to Blackboard such that students have access through their computers, cell phones, or iPads, with easier connection to the Blackboard Gradebook. One of the other drawbacks to using iClicker is that the program is housed on City Campus and my office is on East Campus. There is a secure firewall between the two campuses which made it very difficult for me to work with iClicker outside of the classroom itself. This new system, TopHat Monocle, circumvents this issue and may prove to be a better solution.

Regarding the 10 Minute Reflective Essays, I usually develop questions at the beginning of a class session on an ad hoc basis, reviewing in my mind some of the more important and/or more difficult concepts students need to master; but the students would be much better served if I develop a series of questions at the beginning of the semester that underscores some specific topic or concept they will need to understand for the exams and then make sure the exams reflect this emphasis so I can be sure all questions are well-supported pedagogically. For example, the three questions I have submitted as samples are, in fact, important concepts students need to master in the course but may not be heavily represented on the exams. Further research will uncover just how many questions from the testbanks represent these concepts.

#### Critical Thinking Skills

What niggles at me is my desire to address higher order thinking skills, but my exams by necessity are all objective. It is clear that I could develop questions requiring higher order thinking skills for the 10-minute Reflective Essays.

#### Human Geography Lab

I will continue working on materials in the development of a Human Geography Lab course.

#### Readings

I like the idea of outside readings for my students and have created an edited volume with reading guide questions that I will use in subsequent semesters.

#### Procedures

I would like to have a firmer policy regarding missed Maple TA assignments. At the beginning of the semester I tell students there will be no make-ups for either Terms Quizzes or Cloze Quizzes. Each of these quizzes are open for several days (seven for the Terms Quizzes and four for the Cloze Quizzes). These assignments are posted on the Course Planner as well as on the TASK page in Blackboard; therefore, once an assignment date has been passed, it will not be re-opened. This is a convenient policy but not a satisfactory one. Yes, students may wait until the last minute to complete an assignment, but if they are prevented from finishing because of a technical glitch (either a computer glitch or a University server problem), the student shouldn't be penalized. In addition, I have stated that my general policy in the class is to provide fair but not necessarily equal treatment for all students. Life happens and students face emergencies. I make a distinction between students who have been ill or have some other family emergency and students who just forgot to do the assignment. But still this requires re-opening several assignments throughout the semester, which takes a great deal of time. I do not know if there is any resolution to this concern, but I continue looking. I have passed most of these requests for reopening quiz assignments to my TA and that has helped. I am very mindful of how many of these requests I send her way; yet I am relieved of the technical process required.

I have also made better use of my TA in grading 10-Minute Reflective Essays; however, instead of providing samples of answers that should receive a certain number of points, perhaps I should provide a rubric instead so that she has greater latitude in making scoring decisions. I have yet to find a satisfactory way of returning

papers to a two-story auditorium full of students; however, students would be better served if they could see the comments on their 10 Minute Reflective essays instead of just seeing their scores. Certainly, if they receive less than the total number of points, this should tell them they need to review the concept, but I suspect most students do not do this. Returning their essays in some efficient way, would provide them with at least some comments to indicate where they need to spend more time.

## Appendix 1: Syllabus

### Geography 140: Human Geography University of Nebraska Spring 2013



Instructor: Dr. Katherine Nashleanas  
317 Hardin Hall (East Campus)  
Phone: 472-7905  
Office Hours: T-Th 10:00-12:00 317 Hardin Hall

#### Main Campus

Office Hours: M-W-F 11:30-12:20 934 Oldfather Hall (472-2671)  
Other times & locations by arrangement

#### Purpose of the Course

This is an active learning course. Its purpose is to introduce students to the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding, use, and alteration of Earth's surface. Students will learn to employ spatial concepts and landscape analysis to examine human social organization and its environmental consequences. Students will also learn about the methods and tools geographers use in their science and practice.

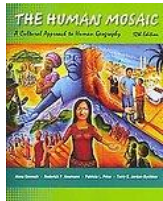
**This course satisfies ACE 9: Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of human populations, cultures, and landscapes, with particular attention to human-environment relations and global interconnections.**

#### Course Goals

1. Use and think about maps and spatial data.
  - Geography is concerned with the ways in which patterns on Earth's surface reflect and influence physical and human processes.
  - You will learn to use maps and spatial data to pose and solve problems. You also will learn to think critically about what is revealed and what is hidden in different maps and spatial arrays.
2. Understand and interpret the implications of associations among phenomena in places.
  - Geography looks at the world from a spatial perspective seeking to understand the changing spatial organizations seeking to understand the changing spatial organization and material character of Earth's surface.
  - One of the critical advantages of a spatial perspective is the attention it focuses on how phenomena are related to one another in particular places.
  - You will learn not just to recognize and interpret patterns but to assess the nature and significance of the relationships among phenomena that occur in the same place. You will learn how tastes and values, political regulations, and economic constraints work together to create particular types of cultural landscapes.
3. Recognize and interpret the relationships among patterns and processes at different scales.
  - Geographical analysis requires a sensitivity to scale, not just as a spatial category but as a framework for understanding how events and processes at different scales influence one another.

- You will learn that the phenomena you are studying at one scale (e.g. local) may be influenced by developments at other scales (e.g. regional, national, or global). You will learn to look at processes operating at multiple scales when seeking explanations of geographic patterns and arrangements.
4. Define regions and evaluate the regionalization process.
    - Geography is concerned not simply with describing patterns but with analyzing how they came about and what they mean.
    - You will learn to see regions as objects of analysis and exploration and move beyond simply locating and describing regions to considering how and why they come into being and what they reveal about the changing character of the world in which we live.
  5. Characterize and analyze changing interconnections among places.
    - At the heart of a geographical perspective is a concern with the ways in which events and processes operating in one place can influence those operating at other places.
    - You will learn to view places and patterns not in isolation but in terms of their spatial and functional relationship with other places and patterns. Moreover, you will be able to analyze how those relationships can constantly change and understand how and why such change occurs.

### Required Materials



Domosh, Neumann, Price, and Jorodan-Bychkov. 2013. *The Human Mosaic: A Cultural Approach to Human Geography* 12e with Blackboard Card. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

[www.yourgeographyportal.com](http://www.yourgeographyportal.com)

In addition, please purchase and bring with you to class:

- 8 ½" x 11" notebook for class (and be willing to use it)
- 1 package of 3x5 note cards

### Basic Course Information

This is an undergraduate 100 level survey course and it will require adult-level responsibility to complete all assignments on time. Our approach will cover a broad sweep of topics related to human culture from the micro- to the macro-scale with a focus on environmental quality. In order to prepare properly for lecture, you will need to:

1. Read the text and come to class prepared for the topic.
2. Attend class regularly and get your assignments done on time. Make sure you know when assignments, quizzes, and exams are due.
3. Be a productive and supportive class member, be willing to do participate. Class is so much more interesting for everyone when class members participate. I'm sure you all have experiences and insights that can add a great deal to our discussions, and I would love to hear from you.
4. Concentrate on learning specifics about the aspects of the human cultural environment we are studying bearing in mind all the elements of scale that are interacting.
5. Be willing to ask questions, investigate new ideas, identify and challenge your assumptions.

### Learning Module Assignments

- Your assignments in this course consist of:

- Reading textbook chapters and flashcards
- Terms Quizzes and Chapter Cloze Quizzes
- Video clips and questions (extra credit)
- Additional reading assignments as posted

#### Quizzes and exams

- Terms Quizzes and Chapter quizzes
  - Terms quizzes will come at the beginning of the unit so you are clear about terms and concepts as we get started with the unit. These quizzes will be accessed through Maple TA Blackboard, and you can access them through your own computer.
  - Chapter Cloze quizzes will be assigned when the unit closes. You will access these by using a link I will provide you to get to the Human Mosaic website. This website is where you will find the flashcards as well as a ton of interesting stuff that can help you get the most from your textbook.
- Unit Exams
  - These will cover several chapters of the textbook and lecture and you will take them at the Testing Center, 127 Burnett Hall.
- In-class quizzes
  - Short in-class evaluation response questions

#### Grade Breakdown

Terms Quizzes	30%
In-Class Quizzes	05%
Total Activities	35%

Chapter Cloze Quizzes	28%
3 Unit Exams @ 50 pts ea.	19%
Final Exam	18%
Total Exams	65%

97% +	A+
92%-96%	A
90%-91%	A-
87%-89%	B+
83%-86%	B
80%-82%	B-
77%-79%	C+
72%-76%	C
70%-71%	C-
67%-69%	D+
62%-66%	D
60%-61%	D-

#### Regarding email:

- Students are responsible to make sure they are getting emails from me. I depend on email to communicate important information to the class. I will send out a test email at the beginning of the semester so students can be sure they have registered their correct email address with MyRed.
- Students must identify themselves by NAME, IDENTIFY THEIR CLASS, AND SECTION NUMBER if they want me to respond to their email.
- If you are copying an old email to send me a new email, it is very important to change the subject line. I rely on the subject line to prioritize my messages so I believe the subject line you send. If you don't change the subject line, I might think it is in reference to old emails and I might not get to it until later.
- So, the beginning of your email subject line should look like this (including your section number):

Subject: 

Geog. 140:001 RE: Your subject heading	or	Geog. 140:101 RE: Your subject heading
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- I will make every effort to respond to an email within 24 hours. If it takes a little longer, have patience. If you do not provide your name, class identification, or relevant subject line, I may mistake your email for spam and not respond at all.
- Be sure to identify yourself by name in your email. Some of you have very creative email addresses that suggest hobbies, interests, or even private jokes. To avoid receiving an email from me asking who you are, please make sure you identify yourself by first and last name.
- One way to get some of your questions answered more quickly is to check the Syllabus to see if I have already answered your question. I know it will take a little time to become familiar with the Blackboard tool for this course, but the sooner you know how to use it and where to go for answers, the easier the semester will go.
- I will have a link on Blackboard, "Class Commons" where I will post questions students have sent me that I believe the rest of the class would also benefit from. As the semester progresses, it might be helpful to check this link, too, before emailing me ... someone may have already asked the same question you are. You can also use this link to communicate with other members of the class. If you want to check your notes with someone, if you are an international student and would like to arrange for a study partner, or even if you would like to simply make a comment about something we covered in class and would like to talk about it more, you can use the Class Commons. Everyone is welcome!!

#### Course Policies

- **Academic Dishonesty**
  - Any academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.
  - Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following:
    - Cheating on a quiz, examination, paper, or other required work
    - Handing in any assignment or project that is not your own work and/or duplicates another student's assignments, papers, and so on.
    - Plagiarism is using **any** material without giving credit to the source. This is the equivalent of academic theft and it is taken very seriously.
  - Students caught plagiarizing or cheating will automatically receive a zero for the assignment and will be reported to the school administration.
- **Accommodation**
  - Reasonable accommodations are available to students with special needs, as long as they have submitted proper documentation to support the request through the Students with Disabilities Office.
- **Assignments**
  - All assignments are to be handed in on time. No late assignments will be accepted unless you have sufficiently explained to me *beforehand* why your assignment will be late and I have granted you an extension. Otherwise, when the assignment date has passed, you will no longer have the opportunity to complete the assignment.
  - Any assignment duplicated by two or more students will be graded as 0 (F)
  - Maple TA assignments, quizzes, and exams will only be available for the days indicated. Please check the Class Schedule to make sure you are aware of deadlines.
- **Attendance**
  - In-class exercises, and occasional sign-up sheets will be ways I will be taking attendance.
  - You are also expected to participate in class, which includes taking lecture notes. Some of the in-class quizzes will be taken directly from class lecture notes. You are responsible for making a record each class period of what we covered that day.



- You are expected to be in class each class period
- **CAUTION!!! If you just quit attending, you will receive an “F” for the course. To remove this F, you will have to re-take the course and pay for it a second time. In order to avoid this financial burden, if you are going to stop coming to class, please be sure to officially drop the course. If you are receiving financial aid, your lack of attendance will be reported to Registration and Records.**
- **Exams**
  - Dates of quizzes and examinations are listed on the Class Schedule and I will make every attempt to honor the dates published. Some of these dates may slip depending on how the class proceeds. If you miss any class meetings, you are responsible for making sure you find out about any announcements.
  - If you need to use a foreign language dictionary, permission will be granted as long as there are no marks or notes in the dictionary or notes stored on an electronic device pertaining to this class.
  - Unit Exams will be computer-based (Maple TA) and will be administered at the Testing Center, 127 Burnett Hall, and you will need to bring a picture ID with you. The exams will usually be open for at least 3 days, and you can take the test any time the Testing Center is open, when you are most ready for it. Be sure you know the days and times the Testing Center is open. Questions will be taken from text readings, handouts, class discussions, student presentations, and any media shared in class.
  - **If you are going to miss an exam** the following procedure **must** be followed:
    1. Contact me by email before the exam and explain why you must miss the class. Only excused absences warrant make-ups. If you just don't show up for the exam, you will forfeit your option of making it up. It also depends on the reason – illness and family emergencies are the general rule. It's difficult to make a case for missing the exam when it is available for an entire week.
    2. It is expected that you will take the exam before the next exam is given.
    3. Missed, unexcused exams count as an F (0). Exceptions are made rarely and only in very special circumstances. Simply telling me you are going to miss an exam does not constitute an excused absence.
  - **ANY STUDENT WHO FAILS TO TAKE THE FINAL EXAM WILL FAIL THE COURSE.**
- **Professionalism**
  - It is important to maintain a proper learning environment where everyone is free to express an opinion based in thoughtful consideration and backed by readings in the course. I hope my students will feel comfortable and relaxed; they will choose to participate, to have fun, and to learn.
  - **PLEASE DO NOT:**
    1. Use your laptops or other electronic devices for anything other than in-class work. There will be a lot going on in class and if you divide your attention, you are likely to miss significant information or announcements (besides the fact that it is incredibly rude). In addition, you will distract the attention of students next to you and behind you, doing them a disservice. Please be a responsible peer and colleague.
    2. Read newspapers or other material that does not pertain to the class after class has started. This also is very rude. If I see this happening, I will stop the class and ask you to put the material away.
    3. Eat or snack in class unless you can do it very discretely.

4. Distract others by whispering loudly or holding private conversations during class, taking up class time for personal issues, or by “packing up” early to leave class (this last one really bugs me).
5. Sleep in class. I know many of you have work schedules and challenging schedules, but it is your responsibility to remain alert in class and motivate yourself to learn.
6. Allow cell phones or pagers to go off during class. Cell phones and pagers must be **turned off** (not to vibrate) and NOT used in class. If a cell phone should go off during class, I will stop lecture and we will all stare at YOU.
7. Leave the classroom during lecture or class activity in order to make a call, answer a cell phone or pager, to go to the restroom, or get snacks. This causes undue disruption and breaks the concentration of the other students. Be sure you are prepared to remain for the entire period once the class begins.
8. Behave in an obnoxious manner, display an intolerant attitude toward the views of others, or display a disruptively negative attitude in/toward the class. Negative attitudes only reduce your own ability to learn and they negatively affect the learning environment for your peers.

I believe in fair and not necessarily always equal treatment for all students. I will treat my students with respect and expect respectful treatment in return. I look forward to sharing the world with you this semester!

# Geography 140: Human Geography

## Semester Planner

Revised 01-05-2013

Wk	Day	Mosaic Ch.	Topic	TASKS	Readings
1	01/07-01/11		Orientation	Terms Quiz	Rubenstein, Ch. 1 Mapping Appendix
2	01/14-01/18	1	A Cultural Approach	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	The Four Traditions of Geography Rediscovering the Importance of Geography
3	01/21 MLK 01/23—01/25	2	Geography of Cultural Difference	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	North America's Vernacular Regions
4	01/28-02/01	3	Population Geography	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	The Migrants Next Door
5	02/04-02/08	Testing Center: Exam 1, Chs. 1, 2, 3 & Readings			
		4	Geography of Language	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	
6	02/11-02/15	7	Geography of Religion	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	
7	02/18-02/22	5	Geography of Race and Ethnicity	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	Sleeping with the Enemy: What Happened between the Neanderthals and us?
8	02/25-03/01	Testing Center: Exam 2, Chs 4, 7, and 5			
		6	Political Geography, Political Space	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	The Revenge of Geography
9	03/04-03/08	8	Geography of Agriculture	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	
10	03/11-03/15	9	Geography of Economics and Development	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	
11	03/18-03/22	Spring Vacation			
12	03/24-03/28	Testing Center: Exam 3, Chs. 6, 8, and 9			
		10	Geography of Urbanization	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	
14	04-08/04/12	11	Inside the City	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	
15	4/15-4/19	12	Geography of the Future	Terms Quiz Cloze Quiz	
16	4/22-4/26	Finals Week: Final Exam will be available throughout Finals Week			

Appendix 2: 10-Minute Reflective Essays (Wallerstein-10 points)

(+1)



A

The world Systems theory is about how we all can communicate, despite our differences. We are in a world with different cultures and do our own traditions while also respecting others. There are many divisions of labor. Immanuel Wallerstein developed the theory. The theory aims to trace the structures of knowledge in distinctive areas such as society, economy, and politics. It is the ~~the~~ most important unit of <sup>the</sup> social world. It is an approach toward history and social change.

Student A: Seems to identify World Systems Theory with a communication network, but does identify divisions of labor within the social world. This student also recognizes it is an approach to world history and social change. (1 point)

B

+10

Wallersteins World Systems Theory is based on the world that is much more than the sum total of the world's state. Most understand niches various countries fill in the world economy. Two of the three basic tenets of the world system theories are:

1. The world economy has one market and global division of labor
2. Although the world has multiple states, almost everything takes place within the context of the world
3. ~~Almost everything~~ The world system has a three-tiered structure; core, semiperiphery and periphery.

The world systems Theory also involves capitalism, to gain a profit.

Student B: Identifies the world economy as being much more than the sum of its parts and that countries fill niches in the world economy. Student B goes on to identify three of the major characteristics of Wallerstein's theory and that it is based on an economy of capitalism. (10 points)

(+8)  
Human Geography C

World Systems Theory states that the economy of each state is interdependent on the world economy. More developed countries like the U.S. and Canada are in the business of services and information services, primarily. Much of their wealth comes from these economic activities. Less developed countries are in the business of natural resources and production of food. These less-developed countries put their goods on the global market which the more developed countries buy and turn into services, information services, and other technologically-heavy products. In a sense, the developed countries have the less-developed countries in a trap, they cannot easily upset the hierarchy of the global economy. The less-developed countries also are "forced" in a sense, to engage in the economic activities that benefit developed countries. Various problems can result due to this unnatural business in less-developed countries. Other economic theories suggest that state economies are much less dependent on the global economy.

Student C: Each state is interdependent within the world economy; identifies the economic activities of developed and less developed countries; although the student does not identify core, semi-periphery, or periphery countries, he/she does speak of a global hierarchy. Less developed countries are caught in a system they cannot change and vaguely refers to problems that result from this. (8 points)

Appendix 3: 10-Minute Reflective Essays (Centrifugal- 5 points)

(+1)

A

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HOKESHOKESHOKESHOKESHOKI  
IKVAMOKVAMOKVAMOKVAMOKV  
HOKESHOKESHOKESHOKESHOKI  
IKVAMOKVAMOKVAMOKVAMOKV  
HOKESHOKESHOKESHOKESHOKI  
IKVAMOKVAMOKVAMOKVAMOKV

Centrifugal force is a force that drives people away from a certain place. While Centripetal force is a force that brings people together to a certain place. These would go well together in a so called refugee state. My hometown takes in refugees that are in a civil war and brings them together. An example of Centrifugal force is like genocide or civil war in their home country. An example of Centripetal force is like a new factory opening up and people move there to get a job.

Student A: Refers to centrifugal and centripetal forces in terms of population movement. (1 point)



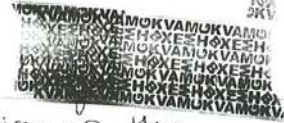
B (13)  
2/27/13  
Centrifugal force is what brings us together, its a force that unites people. Centripetal force is the exact opposite, it pulls a nation or state apart. an example of a Centrifugal force is saying the pledge of allegiance in schools. an example of a centripetal force is massive debate over a key issue that causes hate.  
Don't help. the terms reversed.

Student B: Has the correct application of centrifugal and centripetal forces in relation to political identity, but has the terms reversed. (3 points).



(+5)

C



Centrifugal force is the disruption of the internal unity of a country; and centripetal force is the internal unity of a country. An example of a centrifugal force is a political disagreement. An example of a centripetal force would be a crisis that brings the country together.

Student C: Correctly identifies the terms and applies them properly to political identity. (5 points)

Appendix 4: 10-Minute Reflection (Christaller-10 points)



Christaller's Central Place Theory:

Components: spatial arrangement, size, number of settlement of city and population.

Major term: Central Place, Low order, high order sphere of influence.

Three variables.

1) Market

2) Transportation

3) administration.

Student A: Lists some of the components of Christaller's theory but does not bring them together conceptually. He/she also lists four terms without defining them or explaining where they fit within the theory. Finally, Student A lists the three variables required without explanation. (1 point).

+5

B



Christaller's central place theory explains how cities are placed on the world around you. The major biggest city is at the center. This big city is where people would travel to find objects they could not get in smaller cities. The general shape of the central place theory is pentagonal. There are three types of cities the small ones form around the middle sized one. The middle sized one forms around the larger one. Every model is right next to each other and there is no dead space. The pentagonal model shows how they fit together.

like this



Student B: Identifies the main idea of Christaller's theory to explain how cities are placed around the world, but this explanation is too general. He/She gets the idea that there is a hierarchy of services in different-sized cities and that this somehow affects spacing of the cities, but this is left rather vague. (5 points)

C

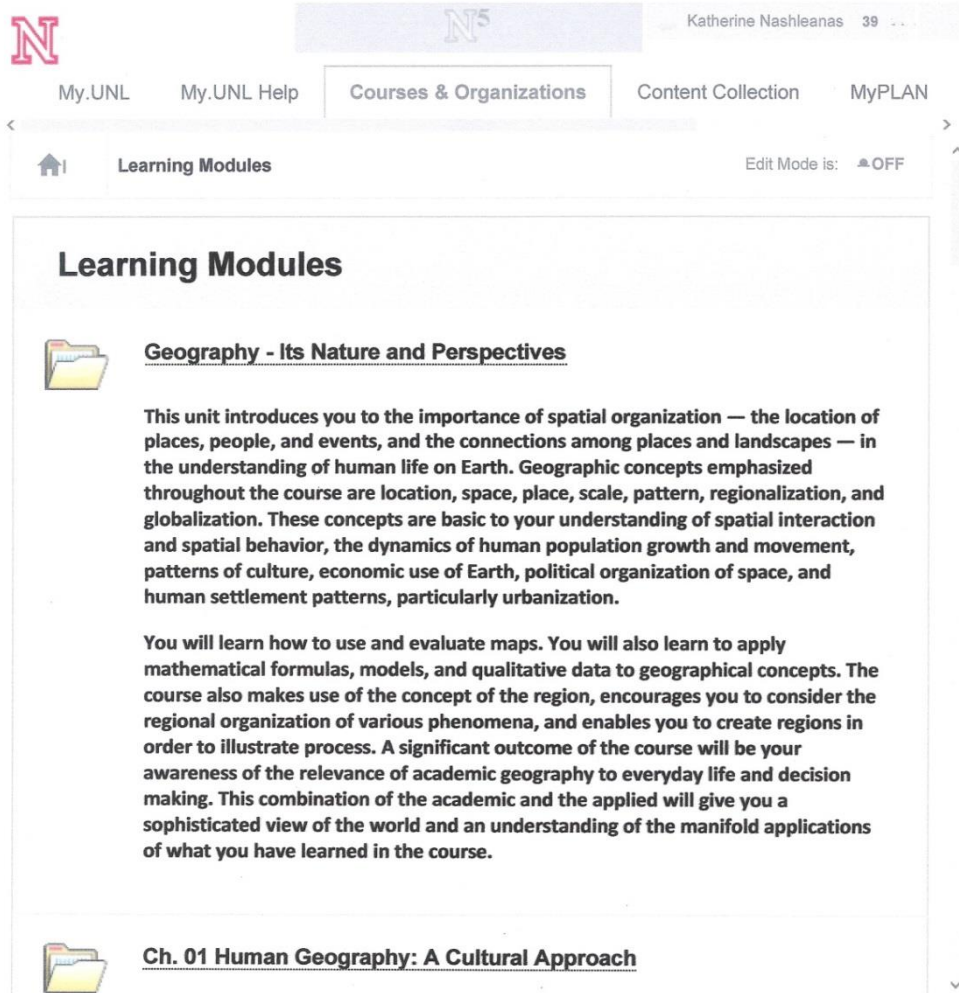
MUKVAMUKVAMUKVAM  
SHOXESHOXESHOXES  
MUKVAMUKVAMUKVAMC  
SHOXESHOXESHOXESH  
MUKVAMUKVAMUKVAMG  
SHOXESHOXESHOXESH  
MUKVAMUKVAMUKVAMG

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Faculty of Geography and GIScience, School of Natural Resources*

## Appendix 5: Blackboard (Example of Learning Module Folder)

Blackboard Learn

Page 1 of 1



The screenshot shows the Blackboard Learn interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln logo (a red 'N') and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for 'My.UNL', 'My.UNL Help', 'Courses & Organizations', 'Content Collection', and 'MyPLAN'. The 'Courses & Organizations' tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a 'Learning Modules' section. The 'Learning Modules' section has a title 'Learning Modules' and a description. The description states: 'This unit introduces you to the importance of spatial organization — the location of places, people, and events, and the connections among places and landscapes — in the understanding of human life on Earth. Geographic concepts emphasized throughout the course are location, space, place, scale, pattern, regionalization, and globalization. These concepts are basic to your understanding of spatial interaction and spatial behavior, the dynamics of human population growth and movement, patterns of culture, economic use of Earth, political organization of space, and human settlement patterns, particularly urbanization. You will learn how to use and evaluate maps. You will also learn to apply mathematical formulas, models, and qualitative data to geographical concepts. The course also makes use of the concept of the region, encourages you to consider the regional organization of various phenomena, and enables you to create regions in order to illustrate process. A significant outcome of the course will be your awareness of the relevance of academic geography to everyday life and decision making. This combination of the academic and the applied will give you a sophisticated view of the world and an understanding of the manifold applications of what you have learned in the course.' Below the description, there is a folder icon and the title 'Ch. 01 Human Geography: A Cultural Approach'.

**Learning Modules**

**Geography - Its Nature and Perspectives**

This unit introduces you to the importance of spatial organization — the location of places, people, and events, and the connections among places and landscapes — in the understanding of human life on Earth. Geographic concepts emphasized throughout the course are location, space, place, scale, pattern, regionalization, and globalization. These concepts are basic to your understanding of spatial interaction and spatial behavior, the dynamics of human population growth and movement, patterns of culture, economic use of Earth, political organization of space, and human settlement patterns, particularly urbanization.



You will learn how to use and evaluate maps. You will also learn to apply mathematical formulas, models, and qualitative data to geographical concepts. The course also makes use of the concept of the region, encourages you to consider the regional organization of various phenomena, and enables you to create regions in order to illustrate process. A significant outcome of the course will be your awareness of the relevance of academic geography to everyday life and decision making. This combination of the academic and the applied will give you a sophisticated view of the world and an understanding of the manifold applications of what you have learned in the course.

**Ch. 01 Human Geography: A Cultural Approach**

[https://my.unl.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\\_tab\\_group\\_id=\\_2\\_1&url=/webapps/bl...](https://my.unl.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=_2_1&url=/webapps/bl...) 5/16/2013

## Appendix 6: Blackboard (Sample of Learning Module Content)

Blackboard Learn Page 1 of 1



  Katherine Nashleanas 39



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[Home](#) [Learning Modules](#) **Ch. 06 Political Organization of Space** Edit Mode is: OFF


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### Ch. 06 Political Organization of Space

 **Ch. 06 Objectives/Assignments**  
Attached Files:  Ch. 6 Assignments.docx (15.756 KB)

 **Ch. 06 Chapter Outline**  
Attached Files:  Skeletal Outline Ch. 6.docx (16.855 KB)



 **Ch. 06 Flash Cards**  
[www.yourgeographyportal.com](http://www.yourgeographyportal.com)

 **Maple T.A. Assignment**  
[Ch. 06 Terms Quiz](#), Homework or Quiz, 2/25/13 8:00 AM - 3/3/13 11:59 PM, 23 minutes.

 **Required Reading-The Revenge of Geography**  
Attached Files:  The Revenge of Geography.pdf (5.154 MB)  
This is a fascinating article from Foreign Policy that will give you some added insight

## Appendix 7: Blackboard (Sample of TASK Page)

Blackboard Learn Page 1 of 1













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**Tasks**
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### Tasks

Status

<input type="checkbox"/> Title	Priority	Due Date	Task Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 001 Rubenstein Terms		Friday, January 18, 2013	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 01 Terms Quiz		Thursday, January 24, 2013	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 01 Cloze Quiz		Thursday, January 24, 2013	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 02 Terms Quiz		Saturday, February 2, 2013	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 02 Cloze Quiz		Sunday, February 3, 2013	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch 03 Terms Quiz		Sunday, February 3, 2013	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 04 Terms Quiz		Monday, February 11, 2013	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 04 Cloze Quiz		Thursday, February 14, 2013	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 07 Terms Quiz		Sunday, February 24, 2013	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 05 Cloze Quiz		Monday, February 25, 2013	Not Started



Appendix 8: Extra Credit Project (A Stranger Among Us – 25 points)

## Evaluation of Film (25 points)

- Please write a short essay including the following information
  - Identify the several groups (ethnic and otherwise) that were represented in the film
  - Whose perspective or perspectives were presented in the film? Give examples
  - Describe in as much detail as you can, the urban ethnic neighborhood of the Hasidim – what did you observe?
  - What did Detective Eden learn about the Hasidic culture?
  - What were some of the mistakes Detective Eden made?
  - What do you believe the value was of showing this film in class?

(You might want to start by creating an outline before you start writing the essay; remember thesis statement, topic sentences, structure, grammar)





A

+7.5

#### Film Evaluation

*A Stranger Among Us* is a film that shows many features dealing with human geography. Such as different ethnic groups coming together, ethnic neighborhoods, and many more. Showing *A Stranger Among us* was a really good idea, because it related human geography terms with real life situations.

In *A Stranger Among Us* there were a few ethnic groups that were identified. The first was Detective Eden who was part of the American culture. The second was the Hasidic culture who Detective Eden worked with. The Hasidic culture had a family member who was murdered and Detective Eden was in charge of investigating the murder. She eventually had herself fully emerged in the culture. The third and final ethnic group that was in the film was the Italian mafia. They were the ones that murdered the Jewish person. They also were threatening the Hasidic culture.

The perspectives that were given in the film were of Detective Eden and then of the Hasidic culture. At the beginning of the movie the perspective was of Detective Eden. You could tell that it was the perspective of her because it was all based on her and the American culture. The other perspective was of the Hasidic culture. This was towards the end of the movie; you could tell it was their perspective because Detective Eden was engulfed in their culture, and the major part of the movie was based on their perspective and their life.

An urban ethnic neighborhood is defined in our book as "a voluntary community where people of like origin reside by choice". The Hasidim lived in their own ethnic neighborhood. It was referred in the beginning of the movie that their place of business is in Hasidim

This student identified the two main perspectives in the film and recognized that the film took place mostly at the ethnic neighborhood level. This student defined ethnic neighborhood, but neglected to describe what it looked like in the film. This student did note the tensions between cultures, how these were portrayed in the film and ways they were resolved. He/she did not go into any detail about the mistakes Emily made. (7.5 points)



B

410

### The Strangers Among Us

Would you be willing to change your ethnic beliefs to solve a murder? In the *The Strangers Among us* directed by Sidney Lumet, Detective Eden goes undercover to investigate the murder of a Jewish man. She lives with the victim's family, including a Hasidic rebbe, and dresses and lives by the religious beliefs of the Hasidic culture. This assignment taught Detective Eden about the Hasidic culture, she experienced and urban ethnic neighborhood of the Hasidim, and got to experience different ethnicities perspectives.

Detective Eden lived by the rules of the Hasidic culture, and by doing so she learned about Hasidic beliefs and values. When she first arrived in the Hasidism neighborhood it was obvious that she was out of place. The way she dressed, talked, and presented herself was more vulgar than the Hasidic culture. She used profanity, and showed more skin than they were accustomed to. Detective Eden also was attracted to the rebbe's son, Ariel, and learned about how the Hasidic culture is accustomed to arranged marriages.

Detective Eden also learns about the Hasidic culture by living in the urban ethnic neighborhood of the Hasidism. There is a lot of segregation among the sexes. For example; on the bus the males sit on one side and the females sit on the other. There is even a curtain that blocks the two sexes from seeing each other. Another moment was when Detective Eden first arrived at the victim's house and asked for some privacy to speak to the rebbe. She was informed that it was not proper for men and women to be alone in a room

together. The urban ethnic neighborhood seemed to be from an earlier time period. The neighborhood didn't seem to have a lot of technology, and there were fewer vehicles than I expected in a Brooklyn neighborhood. It also seemed from an earlier time period because all of the townspeople were dressed very conservative.

Through the assignment to solve the murder, Detective Eden got to experience different ethnicities perspectives. She has her own perspective, which seems to be a Christian culture, and the perspective of the Hasidic culture, that we experience a lot through Ariel. Also, Eden has the perspectives of the people at the police department, including a more modern Jewish man. He made some inappropriate comments about the Hasidic culture, because he follows a more relaxed version of the Jewish religion.

Detective Eden learned about Hasidic customs, experienced a neighborhood of the Hasidism, and different ethnic perspectives in her assignment to solve the murder mystery of a Jewish man. She learned how important family was to them, and how to live a simpler life. Detective Eden made many mistakes in the film, like putting the milk in the wrong fridge and offering food to Ariel that was not kosher. I think this film was a great film to show in class because it showed the importance of culture to neighborhoods and individuals. This film also teaches students to be appreciative of different cultures, Instead of judging someone that lives differently than what they are used to.

This student made a nice comparison between the Hasidic community and popular American culture and addressed some of the perspectives that were showcased in the film. He/she did address some of the mistakes Detective Eden made and noted this was a good film for teaching people to respect other cultures. (10 points)

+15



C

Geography 140

Section 001

29 February 2013

### A Stranger Among Us

In the movie A Stranger Among Us there were many different groups represented, the first and perhaps the most important group was the Hasidim or Jewish group of people who were part of the ethnic neighborhood in New York City. The second group of people that appeared almost as often as the Hasidim people were the New York City police officers, even though they aren't considered a cultural group they are a group of people who have similar interests and spend time in a similar setting together. These were the two most important groups that I identified in the movie.

One thing I enjoyed about the movie was that it wasn't just shown from one perspective. It switched back and forth from the Hasidim people, mostly Ariel, Leah, and Rabbi, to detective Eden's perspective. I liked that the director chose to do that because you could see how the Hasidim people were being affected by Emily's presence. As well as the way Emily began to change the way she acted towards the Hasidim people and the situations she was being faced with in her own life.

Right at the beginning of the movie you could tell that the movie was going to take place in an ethnic neighborhood. Some things that stuck out to me right away was everything was written in the Hebrew language, there were many stores that had signs saying kosher food was sold there, most of the people looked pretty similar the males

wore long black suit coats and had long beards with two curls in front of their face, all of the women wore very modest clothing and had many children. As the movie went on I continued to see that everyone in the Hasidim community treated each other like family and I could tell how important and vital the ethnic neighborhood was to the Hasidim people.

The first thing that I noticed was when Emily went to talk with the Rabbi and Ariel she had to have her arms and legs covered up, also when she asked to talk to Ariel alone he said that he couldn't because it would be to tempting. I also noticed that a majority of the people living in the ethnic neighborhood were involved in some part of the diamond business which I found to be very interesting. When the men and women went into the city the women and men were divided on the bus and there was a sheet running down the middle of the bus that was something that I didn't really understand because they are allowed to see each at other times of the day why not when they were on the bus.

Detective Eden learned a lot about the culture but I think she also learned a lot about herself during her time spent with the Jewish people. She learned that when someone dies you cover up all the mirrors in your house because you shouldn't be concerned with vanity while you are mourning. She also learned that people cannot wear shoes because leather is a sign of wealth, so when someone dies you are considered to be poor. Emily also learned that they have to keep meat and dairy in a separate fridge. One thing that she took away from spending time with the Hasidim people was that she has a beshant, which means soul mate. This helped her realize that she needs to be patient and wait for her beshant.



Lastly, I feel the value in watching this was to see how an ethnic neighborhood works and functions. I have never seen an ethnic neighborhood like the one in the movie. In Lincoln we definitely have areas where people of the same culture live but I don't think that they are as easy to point out as the Hasidim neighborhood. The Hasidim neighborhood was in New York City but to people who didn't live there it was a completely different world. I also saw how ethnic neighborhoods benefit the people who live in them because it gives them a place where they can feel at home even if they may not be in their home. The neighborhood also gives them a sense of community, like in the movie when Ariel's friend died the whole town came and everyone was there for the family.

This student was much more observant regarding the characters portrayed and the ethnic neighborhood. He/she addressed several of Emily's mistakes and what Emily learned about the culture and ultimately, about herself. (15 points)

## Appendix 9: Extra Credit Project (Restaurant – (15 points)

### ETHNIC FOODS IN LINCOLN (15 POINTS)

Have lunch or dinner at one of Lincoln's local ethnic restaurants!! If any of you would like to go as a group, that would be fine, too; but you will each have to write up your own evaluation separately. This is an assignment where you will need to know a little bit about the restaurant, and have a bit of background regarding the country or region **before you go** – so you will have a better idea of the foods and ingredients. This will NOT be like the food challenge on Survivor, so don't worry!! But you can be much more observant if you go to dinner prepared with background about the region first. So, here's what you do:

1. Look up in the restaurant section in the Yellow Pages to see all the ethnic restaurants available. You are to AVOID any chain of restaurants, or fast food restaurants. Try to find restaurants where the owner or most of the people who eat there/work there are from the region the restaurant represents. This is important to try to find genuine representations of the foods. AVOID Chinese, Italian, and Mexican Restaurants.
2. Talk to the owners of the restaurant if possible. You might ask the following kinds of questions:
  - why did they choose Lincoln?
  - are most of the people who come there of that ethnicity?
3. Besides the meal you ordered, what other kinds of dishes do they serve?
  - how does this relate to the country of origin (your text could be a dandy guide here)?
  - what part or parts of the country of origin do the dishes reflect (ditto your text here too)?
4. You MUST bring back your receipt and a menu if you can
5. What did you learn about the culture, their food, and/or about Lincoln that you didn't know before? What did you expect and what was different from what you thought?

If you do a credible and complete job of evaluating your restaurant based on the 5 requirements above, you will receive up to 15 points toward your final grade. If you turn in a brief accounting of the restaurant without the *geographic* analysis, you will receive 1 point for your work.

Enjoy!



A

414

#### Ethnic Foods in Lincoln (15 Points)

I had dinner with a friend at one of Lincoln's local ethnic restaurants called the Thai Garden. This was my first time eating Thai food before because I live in a small town that only has Chinese, Mexican, and Italian restaurants. At the Thai Garden, I ordered chicken fried rice because that is something I *have* had before. The waiter there was very friendly and helpful with the menu. Our waiter was of Asian descent and did not seem to have a visible accent. I later asked him questions regarding the restaurant's history. He said the restaurant was originally owned by his family but was later sold to a different owner. He also said that the original owners chose Lincoln as their location because their family had moved there.

While I was at the restaurant, I noticed that the majority of the clientele that came through for dinner was of Asian descent. Besides the meal I ordered, the restaurant offered appetizers, Thai curries, Thai fried rice, stir fry, vegetarian dishes, seafood dishes, soups, and desserts. Because the restaurant would not allow me to take a menu, I took a picture of the menu and attached it to this paper (along with the receipt).

Prior to visiting this restaurant, I had never tried Thai Food. I wasn't sure what to expect when I first walked inside. I already knew that Thai food is the national cuisine of Thailand. I was, however, expecting the food to be very spicy. My dish and my friend's dish was not spicy though. My friend said her dish was more sweet than spicy. I was also expecting there to be a koi pond inside the restaurant and some form of different seating with mood lighting.

Based on the research I did on Thai food, the meals relate to the country of origin- Thailand. I learned that Thai food is more accurately described as four regional cuisines corresponding to the four main regions of the country: Northern, Northeastern, Central, and





Southern. Each cuisine shares similar foods or foods derived from those of neighboring countries and regions: Burma to the northwest, the Chinese province of Yunnan and Laos to the north, Vietnam and Cambodia to the east, and Malaysia to the south of Thailand.

The only bit of information I already knew about Thailand was that its capital is Bangkok. After researching some information about Thailand, I learned that the Thailand's culture incorporates cultural beliefs and characteristics indigenous to the area known as modern day Thailand. It is also coupled with much influence from ancient India, China, Cambodia, along with the neighboring pre-historic cultures of Southeast Asia. It is influenced primarily by Animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. I also learned about the Thai cuisine. I learned that each region in Thailand has its own cooking style according to available ingredients and local tastes. I also learned from just looking at the menu, that not all Thai dishes are necessarily spicy. I was also not aware of how many ethnic restaurants Lincoln has. Lincoln is home to more than ten Thai restaurants alone.

After visiting the Thai Garden Restaurant I learned more about the Thailand cuisine, culture, and geographical history. I would recommend this restaurant to friends and would definitely go back again.

This student chose a Thai restaurant in Lincoln; good description of the restaurant's interior and menu; related the dishes offered to the agriculture of the region and to the regional history of Thailand. That is, this student applied many of the concepts he/she learned in class to this assignment and, in fact, chose a culture he/she knew very little about. (14 points)



B

+15

Human Geography

March 21, 2013

### Jaipur

Ethnic restaurants can be found all over Omaha. Jaipur is one of Omaha's premier Indian restaurants. For the best in high class dining and authentic Indian food, Jaipur is the best in town. Decorated in classic Indian art, low lighting, and colorful design you immediately feel the culture from the moment you walk in.

In India, given the range of diversity in soil type, climate and occupations, these cuisines vary significantly from each other and use locally available spices, herbs, meat, vegetables, and fruits. Indian food is also heavily influenced by religious and cultural choices. A lot of the dishes reflected the northwestern region of India, where they could grow meat easier. Historical incidents such as foreign invasions, trade relations and colonialism have also played a role in introducing certain foods to the country. For instance, potato, a staple of North Indian diet was brought to India by the Portuguese, who also introduced chilies and breadfruit. They also followed strict traditions with beef being sacred and never used to eat. Jaipur is also the name of the capital of Rajasthan, a state in India.

When talking with the manager of the restaurant they choose Omaha as their location because of their family. While in the restaurant you notice the mix between Indian customers and non-Indian is fairly equal. When I asked the manager about that he explains he brings a

high quality, authentic Indian experience that attracts not only Indian people. He wants to attract a wide target market and by creating a high class atmosphere that makes both customers comfortable in trying new things. It appeals to Indian customers because of the authentic food and appeals to non-Indian because it isn't overwhelmingly unfamiliar.

The meal my table ordered ranged from Naan bread with mint dip to chicken tikki korma. This relates to India because many of their dishes serve bread as the main appetizer. Naan is by far the most popular bread and is served in many different styles, fried or regular. Also, curry is a popular spice used in many dishes. My dish was a variation of red curry sauce with chicken. The meats in their dishes represent their culture too. Hinduism is the dominant religion throughout Indian and is apparent in their cuisine. Cows are sacred in Hinduism and are not used in any dishes, which is why you won't find them on the menu. This represents the country as a whole because the country is predominantly Hindu.

What I learned about the culture is how different their food preparations vary from ours. Their dishes are colorful and use a variety of spices. Being from the Midwest we raise and consume a lot of beef which is taboo in Indian culture. Also, on their menu lamb is a dominant meat used. While common in Indian culture, lamb is very rare to find as a meat in our culture. What was different from what I expected is how colorful all their dishes are. My dish was bright red while another member at my table their dish was bright yellow. Their culture is colorful, vibrant and rich with tradition.

This student chose an Indian restaurant in Omaha. Addressed the regional differentiation of India and how this influences dietary choices in India; interviewed the manager as to how his location in Omaha influences the food choices in his restaurant. (15 points)